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DISCOURSE AT THE FUNERAL

OF

MRS. I. W. CASE.

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DISCOURSE

AT THE

Funeral of Mrs. I. W. Case,

Astoria, May 21, 1882,

BY

REV. G. H. ATKINSON, D. D.

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1882.

Funeral Discourse.

Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 Cor., 4:16-18.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ is the source of light and life to mankind. John, the chief writer and witness, among his chosen disciples and messengers, wrote: "In him was life: and the life was the light of men." Jesus said of himself, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." These statements imply a personal test both of the life and the light. They appeal to consciousness, which is a last appeal in evidence. Jesus challenged friends and foes to test his words by a personal trial. "If ye will do the will," he said, "ye shall know the (doctrine) teaching." You will feel and see its truth and what you both feel and

see you will know. "We must trust consciousness," says the most noted scientist of the day, Mr. Herbert Spencer, "or we cannot reason." "Trust consciousness," said the Great Teacher of mankind 1850 years ago, "and you will come to know me through your highest exercise of reason." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water, springing up into eternal life."

Again he said to those about him: "My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." They said therefore unto him: "Lord, ever more give us this bread." Jesus saith unto them, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." * * * "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." * * * To objectors, with intense earnestness, he said again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of

man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father: So he that eateth me, he shall also live because of me. This is the bread, which came down out of heaven." Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said: "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Jesus said unto them—"Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you that believe not."

HIS FIGURE OF SPEECH.

Jesus used eating and drinking, which satisfy hunger and slake thirst, and give life and strength to the body, to show how eating his words, that is, trusting

them, gives life and power to the soul. It is a strong figure, yet clear and easy to be seen. We eat the words of a teacher whom we trust, and when we do what he requires. Children eat the promises of parents, trust them, rest in them, have peace and joy in them. We trust, and appropriate the words or promises of others in all business affairs—that is, we eat them as we do food, and feel sure and strong and at rest and safe and glad, according as they are worthy of confidence. Husband trusts wife, and wife, husband; child trusts parents, and parent trusts child; neighbor trusts neighbor, and employer trusts the employed, and the latter trusts the former. Home life, social life, business life, and a nation's life, each has its strength, its safety and its joy, as its members have faith in one another. This is the lesson of Jesus of Nazareth. It is the law of soul life. It is the hidden fountain, the well of water that springeth up unto life eternal. It is conscious force and ever-varying energy, as food gives conscious force and impels activity. It is an appeal to the witness within us. Its test is nearer than that of the senses. It is deeper

than reasoning, because it is the basis of the fact of reason itself.

EXAMPLES.

The words of our Saviour were given to be tried by whosoever would hear and obey them. They were not to fail, for some would believe and become his witnesses and the heralds of his gracious promises. They would declare these glad tidings of life eternal in his name and evince the truth by their renewed lives, and ever-growing joy in him. They would multiply in every age and fill the world with the knowledge of this wonderful redemption.

Paul said: "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This was not a mystery, but a simple, conscious fact. It was life, through trusting the promises of Christ Jesus. Paul had learned to take Jesus at his word. Every word had proved true. Every promise had been kept. Jesus was to him the faithful promiser. He had tested him in several trials. He had sought him in severest trials and found relief. He could testify—"In Jesus are hid

all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." So great were his pledges, and so mighty his power, that the apostle wrote the church at Collosse—"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him." Few, perhaps, rise to so great faith, or prove Jesus by so many tests as Paul did; yet every believer bears witness to his answer to prayer; to his comfort in sorrow; to his support in weakness; to his relief in distress. Closer and closer Jesus binds the believer to himself. More and more every branch draws life from him, the living vine. "My peace is like a river," said a dying Christian brother to me, a few weeks ago, and his calm, cheerful spirit, while the body consumed and wasted under disease, proved his words.

Such is our text.

TESTIMONY.

"Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the

things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

This is personal testimony of the inner life. The body is wearing out. Signs of wasting appear. The locks are gray, the eyes dim; the form trembles under disease; the blood stagnates, the heart struggles in vain, but the soul has the vigor that fails not, and the faith that enters within the veil.

"God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Do you ask how this can light up the present and the future? The answer comes from him, who sustains us and makes affliction light in view of the eternal glory. Present things are real but temporary. Future things are eternal. Paul lost all things for Christ, and gained all things forever in Christ. If these are good and to be desired, much more are those beyond. If this home can be the type of comfort and happiness, how much more can that home be, which he has gone to prepare for those who trust and love

him. You desire this home and toil for it. You enrich and adorn it. You make it genial and attractive within, and give its outlook all that is possible of grandeur and enchantment. Life on earth can and ought to become a treasure. It can be clad in bridal robes. It can take on all the bud and bloom of spring; all the luxuriant growth of summer; all the abundance of autumn with its gorgeous tints of crimson and gold, and all the security of winter's garnered stores. It can be a continuous day. This is its highest ideal apart from a life hereafter. But how much richer, purer, sweeter and more comforting the present, when made a part and a foretaste of an endless life! The witness of the apostle in the text affirms a hope full of immortality. He was conscious of a power in Christ that made persecution seem a light affliction for a moment: How much greater the victory of grace that makes Heaven more attractive than our best estate on earth? If it creates a longing in the sufferer to depart and be with Christ, how much more its glory to attract the soul from earth's richest treasures.

Mrs. Fannie E. Case, the beloved daughter, sister, wife and mother, who has been called so suddenly from the comforts and joys, and quiet beauty and attractiveness of her earthly home, passed away calmly, peacefully, with clear mind and without a murmur, or complaint. Everything here was inviting. She hoped to live longer for the sake of husband, children, parents, brothers and sisters, the church, social life, the public duties and enlarged spheres of usefulness open to her and to others in this great Northwest. Her mind grasped the conditions and opportunities of this region and period. Whatever seemed wise and true and needful to be done for private or public welfare on land or on sea, upon which she loved to gaze from her window, found in her a candid attention and a generous response of heart and hand. A lady of clear convictions and strong friendships, she naturally attracted and held such friends. Those in need were drawn to her home and were welcomed. Under the toil and burdens of home life she kept a resolute steadfastness in what seemed to her the path of duty. In the past years of deep affliction, having lost three children and

her first husband, with subdued sorrow and yet with firm step, she has gently led the remaining sons in the path of obedience and industry and Christianity, making home their most attractive place.

The brightening prospects with one chosen to share her responsibilities, lighten her cares, and add to her comforts for the last two and one-half years, have been calculated to refill to overflowing her cup of earthly happiness. Every want was supplied, and enlarged desires and tastes gratified at home and abroad.

THE SOUL'S HIDDEN LIFE.

But she had long ago ceased to trust in this world. A deeper life of faith in God's promises through Christ had been steadily forming her character. Daily reading the word of God, and communion with God in prayer, had given her a robust Christian strength. It was not easily shaken or disturbed. It was reliable for work. It was cheerful and hopeful. Christ imparts gladness. He heals and lifts up and bids the restored to bear the joyful news to all. Our sister had these cheering views of the gospel. It was the fountain of life within.

LIFE IN DEATH.

When suddenly, in the night of May 17th, the feverish pulse gave a sign of danger, and the ever faithful attending physician found all trusted remedies to fail, and when the truth flashed upon her husband, who had hardly left her bedside, and when she also felt that she must leave her happy home; leave her loved and faithful husband; leave her sons, who had been the objects of her tenderest affection and care so long; leave the dear baby boy just folded in her arms and pressed to her heart with all a mother's warmth of love and joy; leave her aged and honored parents, who daily looked to her for counsel and strength; leave her fond brothers and sisters, whose presence was ever a source of pleasure and cheerfulness; leave her large circle of esteemed relatives and friends and neighbors; leave the church of Christ with which she had long been in covenant, and for the growth and welfare of which she had prayed, planned, labored and liberally contributed; leave this bright world with all its opportunities, and attractions and sources of happiness. When called with hardly a forewarning

to leave in a few hours all these dearly cherished friends and interests, she was not alarmed or overcome with distress or confused. With calmness she talked with her husband and bade him not to weep for her, but tenderly committed her children to his care, and gave directions for her burial. She had desired and hoped to live for his sake, and to train up her children for useful, honorable and Christian lives. She left this message and this duty in his keeping for them. Her work on earth was finished. She was going to the mansion prepared by her Savior. Husband, children, parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives, friends, neighbors, brethren and sisters in the church, all—"meet me in Heaven." Such were her expressions and desires. She realized in this dread hour of trial, with the great apostle, the power of faith in Christ: "We also believe, and therefore we speak: knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you." * * "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the

moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things that are not seen are eternal."

Our beloved sister and friend has entered into the things unseen and eternal. She has been welcomed into paradise, by the Savior whom she confessed and trusted on earth.

Who will take up her work in the family, in the church, and in the community, and do it with the same steadfast faithfulness and courage? She taught the Chinaman Charley, who had long worked in the family, such truths of Christ as she could. He now weeps for her as a true friend. He called her mother. Who will now confess Christ and follow Him and learn of Him and find their conscious life in Him! This is your hour and mine. Let us heed this lesson of life alone in Christ for time and eternity.

APPENDIX.

In Memoriam.

At a meeting of the Congregational Association of Oregon and Washington, held at The Dalles, Oregon, July 13–17, 1882, a committee of three—Rev. Geo. H. Atkinson, Geo. H. Himes and L. M. Parrish—were appointed to draft suitable resolutions of respect to the memory of the late Mrs. I. W. Case, of Astoria, Oregon, a member of the Associational Business Committee, and the following report was unanimously adopted by a rising vote:

To the Congregational Association of Oregon and Washington:

We, your committee appointed to draft resolutions of respect to the memory of Mrs. I. W. Case, beg leave to report as follows:

Whereas, In the Providence of God, our beloved sister and member of the Business Committee of this Association for three years, Mrs. I. W. Case, has been called away by sudden death,

we hereby express our high respect and confidence in her Christian character and devotion. We feel sincere sorrow for our great loss, yet believe she has entered the heavenly home, promised and prepared by the Savior. We deeply sympathize with her husband and children, parents and relatives, in their grievous affliction, and commend them to the comfort, wherewith we ourselves are comforted, of God.

Resolved, That we extend our heartfelt wishes for the welfare of the church of which the deceased was a faithful and earnest member, praying that God will cause like zeal and steadfastness in others, and raise up more helpers for the large harvests for which she planned, labored and prayed.